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**ADVENTURES WITH BOOKS
AND AUTOGRAPHS**

GEORGE STEELE SEYMOUR

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D.A.

THIS IS THE
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FELLOW



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Oliver Guy Magee

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The Bookfellow Series
Volume Two

Adventures With Books and Autographs

I ought to write a pretty hand
For such a pretty Page, --
But if in youth we're not inclined
Our Post & L's et al, to mind,
They won't mind us in age.

But though my hand unstable is,
My heart is firm & true --
And has strong hopes & wishes kind
For noble boys like you.

It prophesies success in life,
Honor by honor won,
One little oily drop, that you
A higher one may do, --
Fill Senate for a Seymour its
Among your country's sages,
And give a quiet, happy laugh,
When asked to write his autograph.
By reverential Pages

Grace Greenwood
Washington June 17th 1892. --

Adventures With Books and Autographs

By George Steele Seymour



CHICAGO
THE BOOKFELLOWS
1920

*Five hundred copies of this first edition have been printed from type
in November, 1920, for THE BOOKFELLOWS.*

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To
Walter Romeyn Benjamin
Man of Letters
Documents and Clipped Signatures
all genuine
but none more so than himself

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INTRODUCTION

This is the book for which the world has waited so long and patiently and to which all that has gone before has been in the nature of preparation. It has been in the making for over forty years, coinciding with the author's term of service in this mortal penitentiary. He started taking notes for it at the age of two, observing attentively all that happened and resorting to eminent authorities, such as his mother and his nurse, for exposition and corroboration. In order to qualify himself for the task he studied penmanship, cultivating speed and inaccuracy until now he greatly prefers a letter written by a world-famous celebrity to one written by himself.

For his possession of such marvelously acute powers of observation, which must impress the reader at the outset, the author can offer no explanation, but possible investigators may find significance in the fact that many years of his life were spent in riding on the New York subway, succeeded by other years spent in riding on the Illinois Central. His graces of style have been developed through conversation with his wife and diligent reading of the daily papers. *En passant* he remarked that much useful information can be gleaned from the daily papers if one only knows where to look for it.

Books have been much written about, but the literature of autograph collecting is familiar only to initiates. Until this work was written, the books on the subject were few and outstanding (they still are). In 1918, Mr. A. Edward Newton, who was lying flat on his back under the *Atlantic Monthly* tree, trying to discover the secret of successful authorship,

was struck on the forehead by the apple of popularity, and his book, *The Amenities of Book Collecting*, became a best seller. In it he discusses book collecting from the standpoint of Big Business, with special reference to books inscribed by the authors for which he and others have paid the price of many gilt-edged securities. The main impression which this book leaves with us is the futility of hoping to buy such treasures unless one did so ten years ago, for when one has recovered from the shock of learning today's price (a week is the usual time required), the price has doubled. The sport of such collecting lies in being able to imagine a large enough sum to add to the last recorded quotation to equal the sum which must be paid for the next copy offered for sale. Mr. Newton's account of it is as close to average human experience as an account of a camel journey across the Desert of Gobi, with all the glamor of a pleasure jaunt to the South Pole, which probably not more than one in ten of us has ever taken.

Before Mr. Newton, the field was occupied by Adrian H. Joline, who revealed his weaknesses to the public in two delightful volumes, *Meditations of an Autograph Collector* and *Rambles in Autograph Land*. These books treat of Mr. Joline's views on many subjects, mainly the collecting of autographs, they are discursive and confiding and leave us with as clear an impression of the author as we might get from the brush of Mr. Sargent or Mr. Alexander. A. M. Broadley's *Chats on Autographs* is more impersonally written, filling a niche in a series of Chats about this, that and the other thing, and though machine-made, is well and carefully done and again vindicates Dr. Johnson's oft quoted formula about wise men and authorship.

Looking further down the aisle we see George Birkbeck Hill, the learned editor of Boswell's *Life*, who found time in his spare moments to dash off a few *Talks About Autographs*.

This treatise marked the very birth of literature on the subject of autograph collecting; it was the sunrise of signatures in the land of letters, so to speak. Dr. Hill belonged to what we might call the old school, for he never bought an autograph, which fact perhaps accounts for his possession of a forged Washington document without knowing it to be a forgery, as Joline points out from the evidence of the facsimile alone. So Dr. Hill's discourse is rather more of the contents of his letters than of their standing on the Board of Trade.

And now has come another to join this goodly company; to hold, as 'twere, a mirror up to nature. If you don't like it, that is your business and proves something about you that would interest Dr. Freud, so be particular to like it if you can and escape from the consequences of your past. The introduction is now over. Stage manager, ring up the curtain. Nobody ever reads introductions, anyway.

G. S. S.

In Seclusion, 10-10-'20

Heaven grant you better employ-
ment for your time than the
collection of autographs
yours,

Horace Greeley

D. H. Humphrey Esq.

ADVENTURES WITH BOOKS AND AUTOGRAPHS

From Liverpool.

And a dirty British coaster
with a salt-caked smoke stack
Butting Through the Channel in
the mid March Days
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
road-rails, pig-lead,
firewood, a iron ware, a cheap
tin tray.

J. Mackfield.

Oct 19. 1920.

THE AUTOGRAPH HABIT

One keeps autographs for the same reason that one picks pockets or runs away with one's neighbor's wife — because it is one's pleasure to do so. I know of no better justification for any conduct that affects man primarily in his personal capacity. True, the justification is denied by some, who hold a thing sinful in direct ratio to one's desire to do it, but this view is rapidly passing away under the modifying influence of golf and *vers libre*. The autograph habit is more cleanly than keeping pigs, more convenient than going to Cuba and more portable than aeroplaning or wireless telegraphy, hence it is eminently adapted to the use of the average citizen who usually knows nothing about it and regards it with suspicion.

In the United States Senate in Washington, small boys of from twelve to sixteen years of age are employed as pages. This is a cradle of many sorts of careers, among them, that of autograph collector. Each boy has his album for Senatorial signatures, and sometimes two or three. My own — the complete set of Senators of the Fifty-first Congress — now serves to embellish the two volumes of Senator George F. Hoar's reminiscences, which are replete with references to the men who kindly coöperated with me in the making of it. Of the eighty-eight, only ten, alas! now survive.

From the collecting of Senatorial signatures, the transition to other classes of notables is, for a page, an easy one. Many fish, mostly of minor prominence, came to my net. Often when an unidentified dignitary made his appearance in the offing, the autograph brigade would assail him on a chance and

discover in him a governor or cabinet member. One day word was passed that a notable was in Appropriations, on the gallery floor, and I advanced, book in hand, and returned triumphant with "True to Friend and Foe, W. F. Cody, Buffalo Bill." In the years that succeeded I have seen the same inscription over the same signature more than once; it was evidently his favorite formula. But the climax was reached when I called one day on Grace Greenwood at her home in New Jersey Avenue southeast. She took my book and returned it later in the day with a four-verse poem composed especially for me and ending with the prophecy

One title only dropped that you
A higher one may don
'Til Senator George Seymour sits
Among our country's sages
And gives a quiet, happy laugh
When asked to write his autograph
By reverential pages.

Although I have suppressed sundry flattering personal allusions, I am giving here part of a poem that has never before been published, or even known to exist, which makes this book a first edition of Grace Greenwood and as such of great interest to collectors. Unless, of course, she used the same verses, with appropriate change of name, for all the pages who brought their books to her. But I do not suspect it of the dear old lady and will not be so ungrateful as to suggest it. She has long been my ideal of a truly great poet.

The next step in my progress was the writing for signatures. To all of them I said I was a Senate page, and the response was very gratifying. There were giants abroad in those days; Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Neal Dow, Frederick Douglass and Joe Jefferson alike fell into my net. Ex-President Hayes wrote his short name

several times on a sheet of paper, and I shared my joy with my colleagues. Mrs. Southworth, whose modest grave can be seen on the slope of the hill in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, wrote me a long letter full of kindly advice which might be entitled, "Rules for Attaining Bliss, both Here and Hereafter."

I well remember the first autograph that I ever bought; it was a document signed by James Buchanan, and it attracted my eye in a shop window on Forty-second Street, New York, with the modest price of one dollar attached. I hesitated a long while over the purchase, not because of penury, but on account of the principle of the thing. I objected to the idea that autographs might be bought and sold, and even now it seems a jarring reflection. Why should not every celebrity make it a point to leave behind so many signatures that all who desire them may be accommodated? It is no advantage to one that one's autograph should sell for fabulous prices, and it is a hardship to many deserving collectors. The best celebrities, like Napoleon and Washington, have thoughtfully given us plentiful stores of caligraphic treasures, and this must have afforded them a pleasant occupation for many spare moments, as well as the satisfaction that comes of obliging one's fellows. We commend it to Bernard Shaw.

If every author should follow the example of Dumas and create bales of manuscript all written out in longhand, what an incalculable amount of human suffering would be avoided! Here is a suggested form of bequest: "To my executors I give and bequeath ten thousand letters, documents and signed sentiments, all in my own handwriting, in trust, however, for the public, and direct that they be sent free of charge to whosoever may apply for them." Thus might a celebrity escape the humiliating chance of having scraps of his handwriting listed in catalogues for sale at ridiculous figures, while at the

same time he can be sure that the market for his really important holographs, such as confidential letters to his wife or his publisher, will in no wise be impaired. If one is a celebrity, one should be cautious about writing confidential letters. I have several. Richard Harding Davis wielded a caustic pen and wrote for my benefit (all unbeknown to himself) four letters which I prize highly but dare not publish. The incentive to aid the cause of autograph collecting is strong in the breasts of certain New York publishers, and my collection contains at least a score of letters and manuscripts from the files of a well-known monthly magazine whose editors seem to make frequent visits to the autograph market. I have no objection if they have none.

Perhaps from the boastfulness of my remarks you have derived the idea that my collection is a large and valuable one. In a sense it is not. It embraces about two thousand items and its value is greatest in the joy it has given me. It is what I have wanted it to be, and therein lies its interest to me and to you also, for now for the first time you are reading about the collection of an autograph fancier and not a mere autograph buyer. I have often thought that the pretentious books that some gentlemen have written about their collections have been mere vulgar displays of wealth intended to dazzle the less fortunate. I care nothing for such a point of view—it is without interest because it is lacking in relativity to every-day life. If, let us say, one of those very rare authentic autographs of Shakespeare which slumber in the British Museum (quite the proper place for them) were on sale for a hundred thousand dollars, and I possessed the requisite sum over and above my needs, I would not buy the autograph for the reason that the value I should receive, or the pleasurable compensation, great as it might be, would in no wise equal that to be derived from the use of the money in other ways. The highest

sum I have ever paid for a single autograph is sixty dollars, and I gave that for a letter by "the learned Dr. Samuel Johnson." It is Birkbeck Hill's No. 20, which means that though written at the age of thirty-four it is one of the earliest known, for Hill catalogued every known letter of Dr. Johnson and this comes twentieth, taking them chronologically. Now, the interest on the price of this letter, at five per cent, is three dollars per annum, which is what I pay perpetually for the privilege of keeping it shut up in a book. I may look at it or show it to someone say three times a year — that comes to a dollar a look. Think of the cost of looking at a really valuable letter!

With inexpensive items, or those that one wins legitimately by artifice or cajolery, it is different. These are proper game for the true autograph fancier. I have had several Roosevelts, but the one that adorns my Presidential gallery is a superb inscribed portrait for which I paid nothing. Among my Wilsons is a signed copy of the War Message. A friend offered me ten dollars for it. I said: "This copy is not for sale, but if Mr. Wilson is as courteous to you as he was to me you can get one for the cost of the book, twenty-five cents, plus the postage."

It is this personal quality of my collection that makes me look askance at the proposition of selling it. Only in cases of extreme urgency have I been known to part with a specimen — such, for instance, as having no further desire for it. Edmond de Goncourt is on record as advocating the sale of a collection of autographs upon the death of their owner "so that the pleasure which the acquiring of each one of them has given me shall be given again, in each case, to some inheritor of my own tastes." I do not sympathize with this view at all. The proper place for a really choice collection after the owner is through with it, and the only place that can preserve its

individuality, is a library or museum. How many people have enjoyed the excellent Gluck collection in the public library at Buffalo! Of course, if there is an immense fortune tied up in the collection, and there is no one left to appreciate it, and the estate positively needs the money, by all means let it be sold. But let us not pretend that there is anything but shame in putting a price on the heads of gentle autographs which have no intrinsic value — things for which there should be no price but sentiment and good-will — and selling them like slaves into the captivity of a rich man's household, there to take their places as "possessions" along with his "apes, ivory and peacocks." I feel a keen commiseration for Adrian Joline, who confessed (with tears streaming down his face, I fancy) that no sooner had he paid the bill for an expensive purchase than he tore it (the bill) up and tried to forget all about it. Poor man, he knew no better.

Now that I have vented my rage upon the unfortunate millionaire collector with his circumscribed outlook, let us return to the subject. Of ways of getting these treasures there are many. This seems to be a matter of supreme importance to the carnal mind, for when a particularly precious item is shown to an uninformed friend, invariably comes the question, "How did you get it?" Thus the interest of the Philistine is centered, not on the treasure itself, but on the mode of its acquisition. Doubtless, if it involves no expense, he hopes to duplicate your achievement. His curiosity should not be gratified. "Oh, I got it somehow," is quite a sufficient answer. "I stole it from its rightful owners" will hint to him the unethical trend of his questioning. Perhaps you *did* steal it. In that case, as a lawyer I warn you that title can never be acquired by theft, and as an officer of the Court I advise prompt restitution. Ah, me; this good advice!

Autographs which show that they were written in response

to collectors' requests are usually not valued much more highly than simple signatures, for the reason that most of them are uninteresting. "I have much pleasure in complying with your request" is as uncharacteristic as a note-of-hand. "I presume this will answer your purpose as a specimen of my handwriting" gives no clue to the special ability that has raised its author's head above the crowd. Sometimes, however, this class of note may be highly interesting, as for instance, one that I have by Lew Wallace, written from the old palace at Santa Fe sacred to the memory of *Ben Hur*, very likely at the same desk at which the great romance was written, and signed as Governor of New Mexico, all in Spanish, the official language of the Territory. I presented a page of the Governor's manuscript to the museum housed in that building, but kept this for myself. Such, too, is a peppery little slip in the hand of Horace Greeley, reading, "Heaven grant you better employment for your time than the collection of autographs;" and another by a yet more irascible old codger, Professor Richard Owen, apparently referring to the autograph of a compeer, "I have pleasure in fulfilling your wish but the time taken in searching for the autograph I can ill spare" — clearly pleasure tinctured with a note of regret. Another cameo from the same pen reads, "My permission to be troubled with these articles ought to have been asked for, before they were sent." Did the doughty anti-Darwinian ever have a good word for anybody?

The subterfuge of Ben W. Austin of Dallas, Texas, is well known. Austin invented the Trinity Historical Society, naming it after one of the so-called rivers of his own region, and conferred honorary memberships upon those whose autographs he desired. Newton comments on this disapprovingly — but then, Newton would go out with a stuffed pocketbook and buy his way into another fellow's correspondence file. As between

the two methods, I prefer Austin's. Unlike the Newton plan, it is original and ingenious, and however much we may deplore the fraud, we must admire the imaginative power that conceived it. I could wish that this unique collection had been kept intact and deposited in a museum, as it should have been, and if anyone ever proposes to reassemble it I will contribute my letter of Professor Emil du Bois-Raymond, the French neurologist, who wrote: "It is with very great satisfaction that I have received the news of my having been elected a Non-Resident Member of the Trinity Historical Society of Dallas. I shall always be most happy to lend my aid to the Society in the pursuit of its aims. May I ask you to transmit to the Society my very best thanks for the honour so kindly bestowed upon me."

Miss Ernestine Merrill used her skill to obtain for me letters of George W. Cable and Julian Hawthorne when, in the latter case, I had plied my own arts in vain. I do not know his mood since his unhappy conflict with the law, but formerly Mr. Hawthorne was one of those very remote and superior persons who look upon the autograph collector as a pest and drop his request unheeded into the wastebasket. I have never been able to understand the temperament that would withhold pleasure that might be bestowed at such a trifling cost. Is it an exaggerated notion of one's own importance? Perhaps the self-revelation in Mr. Hawthorne's letter to Miss Merrill will add to our knowledge of the subject.

He writes: "I believe young ladies would more often get answers to their requests for autographs if they would accompany their letters by some information about themselves — how old they are, of what temperament and disposition, — or even enclosing a photograph. For one feels a hesitation about writing into the dark. . . I am very glad you like what I have written; but I wish I knew why you and so many others

want autographs. Do they show more character than the books? Or is it merely that they are less readily obtained? Apropos of that, I believe this is the first letter I ever wrote in answer to the hundreds sent to me for this purpose. Perhaps you can explain that."

Beside this, for contrast, let us put the following modest letter from Sir William Hamilton, the philosopher of the Unconditioned, dated May 23, 1825. "My dear Gibson. I have received a note from you expressing a wish to have two of my signatures for some of your friends. I would find it hard to persuade myself that a memorial of me would carry with it anything of value or of interest to those who do not know me. Least of all can I suppose it to do so for the reason which your partiality has led you to assign. But I think that there is sometimes more want of humility shewn in declining an honor; & under this impression I have complied with your request."

And this from the ever courteous and kindly Agassiz: "I comply with pleasure with your request. I only wish that in so doing I had not to exhibit a very poor specimen of handwriting. But I believe that in proportion as men write more they write worse, which is precisely the contrary from other arts, in which prolonged practice leads to a masterly performance. I take it that the difference arises from the fact that with us writing is not the end, but only the means of recording our thoughts."

Mr. C. L. Morehouse of Western Springs, Illinois, is another who has labored to good effect for the enriching of my collection, but the choicest bit he has given me, and one of the sort that I like best, is this little verse by Frederick Locker-Lampson:

Dear Mr. Morehouse, I'm your debtor —
I've just received and read your letter,

And thank you in a rhyme that terse is
For all you say about my verses.

So now we are a first edition of Locker-Lampson, for the verse has never before been published, so far as I know. He of the Rowfant Library and Kate Greenaway bookplate is a marked man, not for his poetic attainments, which were modest, but for the fact that he married and took his wife's name, thus proving him to have been far in advance of his time. For confirmation of this, see the recent memoir by his son-in-law, Augustine Birrell. The bookplate, by the way, reads "Frederick Locker," which fixes its place in his history, should the point prove important, which is doubtful.

Probably every right-minded autograph collector is led in the course of years into specialization. It is this that gives a rational turn to his yearnings and opens the door of opportunity to dealers who dearly love a trade. Much ingenuity can be expended in this direction. I know of one enthusiast who specializes in wrongdoers, and the blacker the deed, the fairer the doer's autograph in his opinion. Fred Steele of Los Angeles has given much attention to hymn-writers and has a collection of words and music that staggers the imagination. Most of his tuneful favorites leave me quite unmoved, but my heart stands still before a signature of John Milton, and if, when he is gathered to his ancestors, he allows this signature to pass into any other hands than those which are properly qualified to appreciate it — to-wit, my own — I will say that which will cause him to lose face and go unhouseled and unannealed, whatever that is. Another collection consisting of letters and documents all dated prior to the seventeenth century may be likened to the incunabula of book collectors.

My tastes also have run in channels. Political and military men have never interested me deeply, except that I have a set of the Presidents which I constantly hope to improve and plan some day when it is perfect to have inlaid and bound with

engraved portraits in red russia leather, making a permanent book of it which I trust future generations will not desecrate. Signers of the Declaration are hopeless to any prudent collector and I have never allowed my thoughts to dwell on them. Scientists have been among my pen-and-inkly loves, and have culminated in a three-volume work which will be described later. Certain special names, such as George Bancroft and Herbert Spencer, I have pursued relentlessly; but most of all, my affection has been lavished on British and American authors. When the fever breaks out I take my British scrap-book and visit Addison, Pepys and Alexander Pope; among the cortege of Johnson I find Mrs. Thrale, Lord Chesterfield and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Byron flaunts before me his impudent request "for the loan of one hundred," adding shamelessly, "and for this and other similar favors received I will cheerfully sign a note." Then come Charles Dickens and Charles Lamb; several Poets Laureate, including Southey, Wordsworth and Tennyson; Browning, with a long letter about renting a studio; George Eliot, with a three-page letter signed M. G. Lewes; and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, with his most abominable scrawl. But in starting out I took an oath not to make this a catalogue of names, so no more.

My American literary book is equally consoling, for here are a number, including Whittier and Holmes, who have written at my request. Amiable Mrs. Stowe waited (until I thought I had lost her) for February 22nd, 1893, so that she could pen the words, "Written on Washington's Birthday." This is matched by Mark Twain, whose contribution reads, "Here you have it, and on Shakespeare's birthday at that." Some have thought Mark Twain rather crabbed about such requests, but my own experience disproves this and restores him to his proper place among the better class of American authors.

There is no Poe in my collection, but Hawthorne, Irving

and Cooper, Bryant and Emerson console me for his absence. Benjamin P. Shillaber, whose birthplace in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, I have photographed, has flooded the market with autograph quotations from his own works. These two he wrote for Mr. Morehouse (and me) :

Firm trust in God, a conscience clear,
A heart resigned and dutiful,
Make heaven a thing more sure and near
And earth a world more beautiful.

During the recent rise in flour, Mrs. Partington remarked:
"I have always observed that whether flour is dear or cheap
I have to pay just the same for half a dollar's worth."

Many of my choicest American specimens cannot be quoted, for they are personal letters from authors of my acquaintance. I value them very highly and sometimes show them to the elect, but I will never part with them. To do so should be considered a breach of trust. Once I knew a collector who coveted an interesting batch of letters written to me by a distinguished poet. I gave him one. Not long ago I saw it listed in the catalogue of a dealer. Perhaps some way will suggest itself of sharing, in course of time, the enjoyment of these letters with those who can appreciate them, but they will never be thrown on the market.

A substantial part of this group has gone toward embellishing a copy of Hemstreet's *Literary New York*. But this, as the late M. Mansard might be expected to say, is an entirely different story.

Freedom's Star

"Cheer up. Brothers on us go

"O'er the Mountains, ^{Western} Ho

"Where herds of deer and buffalo

"Furnish the fare.

"Then over the hills, in ^{regions} Beyond.

"For Freedom's Star

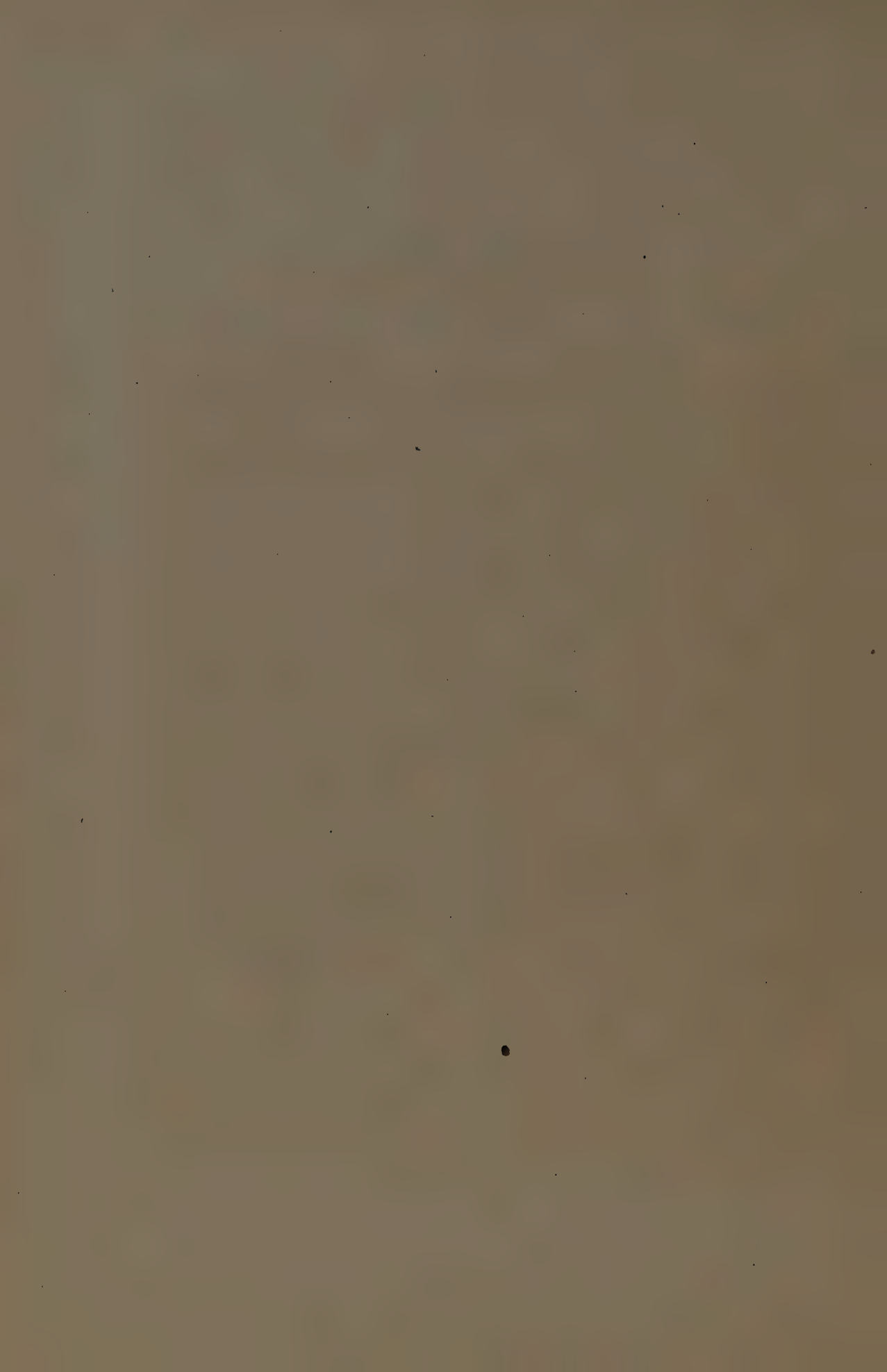
"Points the Sun - set ^{regions} Beyond.

"Hu. ha kaha!"

from an old song.

Harriet Garland

New York.
Nov. 1917.
2



BOOKMAKING AND BOOKKEEPING

There is no — well, perhaps there are some, but they are few indeed and outstanding, such as being happily married — satisfaction to compare with that of owning a unique book. Not a book for which one has spent the treasure of Franchard in competitive bidding with one's fellows, such as Poe's *Tamerlane*, a monument to man's cupidity; but a book made by one's own efforts and of which there is only a single copy in existence and that one is on my shelf.

It is a necessary point in my evaluation of a book of this sort that it shall be worth doing; that its embellishment or improvement shall add beauty or interest or even value to it. Of course, one can take seed catalogues and string them together to make a book, but when it is done, who would care to have it? There is my touchstone. There is the difficulty with so many "extra-illustrated" volumes. Ask your friend if he would accept it as a gift. If he says No, give it to him "and thank God you are rid of a knave." But be sure he is telling the truth about it.

My *Lyric Year*, for instance — a book of one hundred poems published by Mitchell Kennerley in nineteen-twelve as the first issue of an annual intended to exemplify the best recent work of one hundred American poets. Three prizes were offered, and were awarded respectively to Orrick Johns, George Sterling and Thomas A. Daly. No doubt there were many disappointments and heartburnings. Only one issue ever appeared. "Never again!" said Mr. Kennerley, speaking from the standpoint of the one who had to face the music.

Including contributors, judges and publisher, one hundred and four persons joined in the making of the book. As soon as I saw it I realized its possibilities and determined to secure an autographed copy, Mr. Kennerly very kindly consenting to forward my requests. My system was this: First I wrote to the author of each poem asking permission to send forward the page upon which the signature was desired, then, on receipt of a favorable response, I sent the page between cardboards with a stamped envelope for returning. I unbound and separated the pages of two copies for this purpose, as a few sheets got lost in the mail (we will assume it was the mail). This work took a year to complete, including a full levant binding by Riviere, and the book now contains the signatures of one hundred and one out of the one hundred and four book-makers. I have not despaired of getting the remaining three.

Many interesting incidents occurred. A couple of authors claimed that their poems had been wrongly set up, and made extensive changes in the printed copy — they said nothing, however, about their own tardiness in reading the proof. I got the signatures of the anonymous lady and of the lady who cribbed a poem of Arthur Sherbourne Hardy and submitted it as her own, “to see if it would be accepted.” A few sent me inscribed volumes of poems. Madam Julia C. R. Dorr, a dear old lady and good poet, was confined to her bed when my request reached her, but she had a member of her household send me her greeting coupled with a promise to oblige me when she was up and about again. She died shortly after, and I had to be content with a clipped signature. One day I was honored by a visit from Bliss Carman, one of the great poets of our time, who was on his way to lecture at the University of Wisconsin and dropped in, after his friendly fashion, to return his signed page in person. These are memories that will not quickly fade.

The noblest mission of an autograph, it may be said, is to make some good book happy. I refer now to the pleasing practice of extra-illustrating books by the insertion of autograph letters of persons referred to in the text. This is not true extra-illustrating, which consists in adding to the book pictures illustrative of all the nouns and verbs contained in it — or as many as can be covered, taking into consideration the world's available supply of pictures. The late John M. Wing was most industrious at this craft and I have often watched him at the work of creating those marvelous tomes which now grace the shelves of the Newberry Library in Chicago. He kept his extensive collection of prints in a specially made cabinet which covered one side of the room and from these he would select what was needed for the volume in process of manufacture. He would then pare off the edges of his print and fit it into the "window" of a larger sheet of paper similarly prepared, so there would be no perceptible increase in the thickness of the paper at the juncture. I saw him at work on a copy of *Ivanhoe* which, when done, was extended to several volumes by this process, and the pictures added, besides illustrating scenes from the book, included numerous views of trees, horses, dogs and other common objects which certainly added nothing to the understanding of the text, but, on the contrary, interfered greatly with the reader's finding it at all if he desired to do so. But that contingency seldom arose, for Mr. Wing said that once a book was completed, bound and "shelved," he rarely opened it again, and then only to display his folly to a chosen few.

Such books do not appeal to me, for they lack the emotional element indispensable to a really desirable article. They are unique enough, it is true, but only so because no one has considered it worth while to duplicate them. Now, this remark does not apply if, instead of indiscriminate illustrations, autograph letters be used, for these bring into a book a

measure of the writer's own personality. Some decry this use of autographs on the ground that the letter is worth so much more than the book that the more valuable article is swallowed up and lost in its surroundings. I do not subscribe to this doctrine for the reason that the value is a sentimental one, and there are many books that I consider worth more than the most valuable autograph letter that ever existed. The view is unjustifiably commercial. Then, too, one need not consider embellishing a cheap edition of Shakespeare with letters of the author, nor a copy of Byron or of Burns; one can cut the coat to the cloth, as it were; (my allusion is not to be taken as having reference to the reprehensible practice of detaching signatures from documents). One can choose, for example, a copy of the recent *Life and Letters of Edward Everett Hale*, a most worthy subject, whose epistolary remains are plentiful and cheap. By collecting the more important sort of these, one can add much value and interest to an already valuable book. Happy accident may even lead one, as it had led me, to the possession of the original of a letter referred to in the text — a satisfaction hard to excel.

There is no fitting name for such books. They have been called extra-illustrated books, but this is confusing and not properly descriptive. I have thought of calling them ecritomes, which means, a combination of the writing and the book; not merely an autographed copy nor yet an association book. *The Lyric Year*, of which I have spoken, is an autographed copy; now for some examples of the other classes.

A long time ago I picked up at auction for a small sum — so small that it would not stay remembered — a slip in the handwriting of Thomas Carlyle, signed as he often signed his notes, with his initials, and addressed on the back to Mr. Robson. It read:

This, I think, is now the most of the raw material for No.

5. *I am idle till you return it me; and accordingly am going*

to the country for two days. Not *later* than Wed. night or Thursday morning, I beg! — And tell me how many pages there are in all.

Chelsea, 7 April —

T. C.

Years later, on a second-hand counter, I found a copy of the first edition of Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, and on the reverse of the title-page I read, "Printed by Robson, Levey and Franklin." I at once thought of my autographic note of Carlyle's, at the foot of which some former owner had written in pencil: "The above was written by Thomas Carlyle in 1850. It refers to No. 5 of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* which he was then putting through the press." I produced the seventy-five cents asked for the volume (this was before the day of increased printers' wages) and hurried home, convinced that I had a "find." Sure enough, the dates tallied, and without doubt this was the very message sent by Carlyle to his printer with the proof of the pamphlet entitled "Stump Orator." The little slip is now mounted in the volume, together with an engraved portrait of the author, and the result is an association book, not costly, but of greater interest to me than some of its more financially aristocratic contemporaries.

Here is an ecritome. The early years of the present century saw the publication of a number of resumés of the progress of science in the century just closed. It was a subject which interested me deeply, and I took a special liking to *The Story of Nineteenth Century Science* by Dr. Henry Smith Williams, which first appeared in Harper's Magazine and later in book form. The story was told in a style both popular and accurate, and from the standpoint of the personalities connected with it, and was profusely illustrated with the portraits of men for whose achievements I had much respect. I also had an autographic nucleus for the embellishment of the book. Plans, which persisted for years and cannot even yet be considered closed, began to germinate forthwith.

A large document signed by the astronomer Laplace as a member of Napoleon's *Senat Conservateur* determined the size of the projected work, which may be described as a tall folio. As the original book was octavo, that meant the mounting of every one of the 238 leaves, as well as the portraits and letters that were to be added. This has now been done, in part by professional mounters, and part, less expertly, by myself, making in the final accounting three volumes bound in green half morocco with specially printed title-pages. Among the more interesting of its contents are specimens from the pens of William and John Herschel, Isaac Newton, Humphrey Davy, Benjamin Franklin, von Humboldt, Erasmus, Charles and George H. Darwin — three generations — Buffon, Baron von Leibnitz, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Auguste Comte the Positivist philosopher, Lavoisier, Edward Jenner, Goethe, Gall and Spurzheim, Ampere, James Watt, Faraday, Louis Pasteur, Crookes, Roentgen and Dr. Hahnemann. Many of these names are household words and their works confront us on every hand. There is a group of fourteen letters of Herbert Spencer, including two entirely by his hand, representing phases of his life from 1862 to 1899. Three of these enclosed quarterly remittances to Mrs. Spencer, a relative, for the education of her daughter; one gives advice as to the investing of money and another is on the subject of renting a house formerly occupied by Mr. Grant Allen. To Sir Andrew Clark, his physician, he writes, "I cannot report favorably — worse rather than better. I do not get more than two hours sleep at night and can eat but little in the day," and this seventeen years before his death. There is also one of the verbose lithographed circulars which Spencer used in denying requests of all sorts.

There are two letters, one in English and one in French dated under the Republican calendar, of Benjamin Thomp-

son, the American count, who adopted for his title the name of Rumford, his birthplace, once borne by the town that is now the capital of New Hampshire. This is why titles of nobility may be seen on headstones in the little cemetery at Concord. There is an interesting letter from John Stuart Mill differing at length with a fellow writer on economics. There is a letter of Joseph Priestly soliciting alms on behalf of an indigent parishioner, which reminds us that he who discovered more curious things than any man of his generation was also a clergyman. Of the eight Agassiz items, one is a tuition receipt given to a pupil, and one of the Volta items is a signed prospectus of classes at the University of Pavia, of which he was director. In all, these three books contain 233 letters and documents, representing 146 scientists and philosophers. It is to be regretted that Dr. Williams did not treat more fully of the achievements of Americans, and by way of evening up, I have inserted writings of all the Secretaries of the Smithsonian Institution—Joseph Henry, Spencer F. Baird, Samuel P. Langley and Charles D. Walcott, all scientists of the highest ability. Only Langley is mentioned in the book. Dr. Williams saw and autographed the title-page of the first volume.

Another ecritome worthy of notice is a copy of M. A. de Wolfe Howe's *Life and Letters of George Bancroft* in two volumes, which is a repository of twenty-two of Bancroft's letters written at different periods of his life, from his nineteenth to his eighty-eighth year. One of the advantages of Bancroft collecting is that his age at time of writing can always be deduced from the date of his letter, since he was born in 1800. He lived to see the introduction of railroads and telegraphs and many more wonders into the country whose history he wrote. Within his span, the rushlight and candle gave place to illuminating gas and that in turn yielded

to the electric light. His first trip across the Atlantic was made in a sailing vessel, his last one in a steam-propelled floating palace. When he opened his eyes upon the scene, John Adams was President and Madison, Monroe and others of the elder statesmen were men of the hour; when he closed them, the civil war was a memory and its heroes fast fading into the panorama of the past. He saw the political power of Andrew Jackson rise and fall, concerned himself with the fortunes of Tippecanoe and Old Rough and Ready and shouted for political parties of whose significance we have now only the vaguest idea. He watched the rising tide of the Emancipator's career and pronounced his eulogy when he lay in the coffin. He represented his nation with dignity in foreign lands and was himself typical of the scholarship, the ingenuity and the sturdy spirit of his generation.

On one occasion I saw this old man entering his carriage in Washington, and when, after his death, the contents of his house, 1623 H Street, N. W., went under the auctioneer's hammer, I took advantage of the license extended to prospective buyers and invaded the premises. There was a great mass of furniture and curios, the spoils of long residence abroad. I remember distinctly seeing at the head of the stairs a life-size portrait of Queen Victoria, the possession of which seemed in my mind almost incompatible with the highest standards of American citizenship. The youth in knickerbockers was not a bidder at the sale that followed.

All of these Bancroft letters are written in longhand (some, of course, by an amanuensis) except the last one, dated October 15th, 1887, which is typewritten. It is addressed to General Carl Schurz, and the opening and closing invocations are in Bancroft's own unsteady hand, which recalls the fact that when typewriters were first introduced the fully typed letter was considered to savor of too great impersonality for friendly

intercourse, so the "My dear sir" and "Yours truly" were left to be filled in by the sender. The contents, too, of this letter are interesting enough to quote. He says:

I am as yet unable to reply to your letter according to your wish, because my copy of your *Life of Clay* was read by me at Newport; but so soon as I receive it, I will see if my remarks in the margin have the least that is worthy of your attention, and if so, will certainly make no scruple of forwarding it to you. In the meantime preserve your regard for me, for my older friends are all passing away.

As originally written, the concluding phrase read:

for my old friends around me are all passing away

but Bancroft, with an author's instinct for fine shades of meaning, made the changes by pen, while his mind dwelt on thoughts that all men think when they stand on the threshold of eternity. Even then his busy brain was running down, for Mr. Howe tells us that when, three years afterward, Senator Hoar called on him, "before the short visit ended, the memory clouded and the grasp relaxed." He died January 17th, 1891.

Speaking of Senator Hoar, what a splendid ecritome his *Autobiography of Seventy Years* would make! My wife's copy contains the pages of my first autograph album with the signatures of all but one of the Senators of the Fifty-first Congress, many of whom are mentioned in the book. I remember the grandson of Roger Sherman very well, as he stood behind his desk with spectacles pushed up on his forehead, presenting a report of the Committee on the Judiciary, the very picture of an adorable old New England schoolmarm. His secretary's name was Doherty, and his way of saying "Dorrity" with a slight burr, I shall never forget. It was typical of something, possibly New England but more likely of George F. Hoar. We have added to the book a photograph which we took of his grave in the historic Sleepy Hollow cemetery at Concord, where he was born. We love him, and everyone should love

him, not only for his scholarship and gentle manners, but for the breadth of mind shown by his statement, "I never inquired into the politics of anyone whom I recommended for public office, but only into his fitness to hold the position."

To collect effectively, one should have a real regard for the subject of one's labors. The reason why these sturdy New Englanders are such good collecting material is that they were great characters. They were intolerant only of intolerance, and fought hard against it. Their church-spire has stood near their school to such good effect that one may walk with them without tarnishing either his politics or his religion — a quality heretofore thought to be monopolized by the Church of England. When we get many letters from a man, even if they come by way of Mr. Benjamin's post office, we begin to know something about him, and if we are thereby enticed into the study of his published works, so much the better. Edward Everett Hale is one of the most satisfying of these, and although the phrase "Do you love this old man?" spread broadcast underneath his picture by some now forgotten advertiser provoked many a smile, we need not be ashamed to answer, "yes." Miss Lilian Whiting's companionable *Boston Days* is illustrated with fac-similes of letters from well-known Bostonians, mostly written to Edwin P. Whipple. I happened to have the Hale letter which she used, and have mounted it in my copy of her book.

The writings of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, another sturdy New Englander, are to me an unfailing source of delight. In his life he upheld the best traditions of his clan and when he came to write of his yesterdays he naturally called them *Cheerful Yesterdays*. Blessed is he that is cheerful, for his reminiscences shall be good to read. Many of his books are in a reminiscent note, for he soon found that the world was willing to read about him. *Part of a Man's Life* is made

the more interesting by numerous plates of autograph letters, some of four pages each, written to Higginson by distinguished contemporaries. My Higginson autographic material is preserved in a copy of his one-volume *History of the United States*. Among it is a slip reading, "for Mr. Seymour. Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Cambridge, Mass." Who the presentee was, I do not know. One of the letters is of more than passing interest:

My dear Mr. Morehouse;

As you say that you are illustrating *Authors at Home* I will ask you to correct a misstatement in Mr. Cooke's sketch of myself: namely, where he says that I took part in a plan for the rescue of John Brown. No such plan was ever formed, because the old hero promptly forbade it; and the plan of which Mr. Cooke is thinking was one for the rescue of Stevens & Hazlitt, John Brown's associates, who were executed later. It proved impracticable, however, although Captain Montgomery & a party went from Kansas to survey the ground.

Very truly yours

Thomas Wentworth Higginson

If an author wishes to catch my fancy, he can best do it by illustrating his book profusely with fac-similes of autograph letters. There are several such books in my library. I had intended to speak of them all in one place and point some sort of a moral with them, but it seems they are getting scattered all through this chapter, so they will not get a chapter to themselves, after all. Besides, I have not been able to think of any moral. One of my choicest ecritomes is a book which gives little samples of the handwriting of Tom Moore, Lady Blessington, Mrs. Hemans, Theodore Hook, Thomas Hood and other literary worthies of the fifties and sixties. It is Hall's *Book of Memories*. Its author, S. C. Hall, was a friend of my grandfather's and mailed him the book in parts as it appeared. It is also one of my earliest biblic passions, and many a charmed hour I spent over its anecdotes and wood-cuts when

the reading mania first seized me at the age of twelve or thirteen. Here is the very book, bulging with added material, including letters from Coleridge, Dickens, Wordsworth, Scott, De Quincey, Leigh Hunt, Walter Savage Landor, Cooper, Irving and Hawthorne. The Hook letter is signed with a pictograph, as befits such a noted humorist, and is placed opposite the anecdote of the street that Hook made famous in a day. He selected two inoffensive old ladies as the butts of his joke and made appointments in their names with all sorts of people for every hour in the day. Thousands of visitors invaded the street, culminating with the Lord Mayor in his coach of state; Hook, with a friend, watching the confusion from a window across the way, though he was obliged to conceal his whereabouts from an enraged populace for months thereafter. It was probably the greatest practical joke ever perpetrated. If a collector were to specialize in Hook (I have never heard of anyone doing so), doubtless he would be able to locate some of the letters of invitations to Berners Street. How interesting the complete set would be! But perhaps Mr. Newton has already acquired it.

Being an author and editor, and the husband of an author and editor, Mr. Hall had an enviable acquaintance among the literary people of his day. Some of the calligraphic samples that he shows were written in Mrs. Hall's album by friends who attended their hospitable house parties. He writes at length of Charles and Mary Lamb, whom he knew well. His pages redound with tales of such half-forgotten worthies as James Hogg, William Maginn, Jane and Ann Maria Porter, Father Prout, Letitia E. Landon, Douglas Jerrold, Alan Cunningham, Elizabeth Fry, Hannah More, Bernard Barton, Grace Aguilar and Ugo Foscolo. They are well worth knowing. At the end of the book he has added recollections of artists of his time, among whom are Benjamin West — I have

inserted an original drawing from his notebook — Sir Thomas Lawrence, Benjamin Haydon and William Mulready, who can be reinforced in no more appropriate manner than by a copy of his design for the first English postal insignia — stamp would not be the right name for it, as it covered almost the whole front of the envelope. Hall at last brings his memories to a close with the significant words, “&c. &c. &c.” Perchance someone — could it have been Mrs. Hall? — tapped him on the shoulder. The tea of authorship was growing cold.

I have an almost complete set of autographs of the authors mentioned in this book. Not being so much interested in the artists, I have spent less effort on them. Mounting the letters to the size of the book and binding the whole in two volumes will be for the future.

Another ecritome, in a way a complement to Hall's book, is Hemstreet's *Literary New York*. Here the past is revived for us in the names of James K. Paulding, Henry Tuckerman, Lewis Gaylord Clark, John G. Percival, Josiah Bartlett, Charles Godfrey Leland, besides many more modern and more noted authors. The collection in this book is not as complete as my Hall, for I frankly confess that I never expect to get a Poe letter.

More could be said about these dear old people and their letters, but it may be well here to take a hint from the shoulder-tapper (who probably was Mrs. Hall) and finish with
&c. &c. &c.

The Marching

The old eternal spring once more
Comes back the sad eternal way
With tender ray of light before
The going out of day.

The great white moon across my door
A shadow in the twilight stars.
But now forever comes no more
That wand'ring look of hers.

Blissfame

BOOKS ABOUT BOOKS

Of the making of books about books there is no end. This epigram occurred to me suddenly while sitting on the edge of a coal-scuttle trying to write a sonnet to the Garden of Eden.

We have it from no less an authority than my friend Tom Kennedy that the sonnet is the hardest form of poetry to write, and certain 'tis that the coal-scuttle is no rocking chair, so why not let the Garden of Eden go unsung? A novel thought, and rather pleasing to me in my present mood. The sonnet market is a narrow one at best, and George E. Woodberry is quite capable of supplying all it can absorb, so I heeded not unwillingly the voice of my control and turn to prate of bookly books. Moods are far more reliable than conscious choice, any day.

In the first place, do not imagine that I am going to call the roll of all the books about books that have ever been written. Burton's *Book Hunter* and Lang's *Letters to Dead Authors* are well known to the retail trade and need no further exploitation. The former is printed in such fine type that I cannot get the hang of it — it is like trying to hear a person on the telephone when the typewriter is going. Format is not literature, but it has much to do with making literature appreciable. Without a proper format, literature is like a superb landscape presented to a blind man. It takes eyes to see it, and the better the sight, the better the view. This leads some into the error that good format is all, so we find collectors of specimens of fancy printing, of bindings, of books in languages they cannot read. All very well as a way to satisfy

the collecting passion, but these men are not bookmen — they are only half-bookmen. They have mistaken the means for the end. A good book, like a good man, must measure up to the rule, *Mens sana in corpore sano*.

No doubt if one cared to make an intensive investigation, one would find that Austin Dobson had written something on the subject. In fact, it would be rather an unwelcome surprise suddenly to be informed otherwise. Say one is at the tea-table, or visiting friends of an evening, and a mysterious yellow envelope is laid apprehensively in one's hand. Straightway there is an air of suspense, an intuitive feeling that something is about to happen, or has happened, or may never happen. Readjustments impend, and it seems that things are never again to be the same. You — even you, with all your boasted equipoise — falter a bit as you tear the flap. "Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen. An important message from my chief literary investigator. Will you excuse me if I read it?" The question is purely a conventional one — a conventional answer is given. Heads incline politely. The Secretary reports but one ballot cast. The niceties observed, you train your eyes for the first time on the fatal message. What! "Austin Dob—" you murmur, turning the least bit pale. The guests gaze at each other with a wild surmise. They are as ignorant of the contents of the message as I am. But you, *you know*.

I have worked myself up so over this wretched business that it has quite unnerved me. Some day when I am at the Library I must think to look it up. Meanwhile, let me cover my retreat from this Dobson fiasco by a display of erudition upon a subject that I wot of — one George Hamlin Fitch.

Now, George Hamlin Fitch had been for thirty years book-review artist for the San Francisco *Chronicle* when the notion seized him to write a book. A son, upon whom he had built

great hopes, died, leaving unfulfilled the promise of a worthy manhood. Fitch wrote a splendid tribute to this son, one of the most appealing things, I believe, in all literature; then he turned for comfort to the five-foot shelf of Old Reliables — the books, as he tells us, that he reads for recreation when the task of reading the latest rubbish for review purposes begins to pall. The result was a little volume entitled, *Comfort Found in Good Old Books* — a misnomer, I claim, for it should have been called *The Soul of George Hamlin Fitch*, or *The Complete Fitchiensis*. As a self-revealer, he is in all respects the equal of Boswell, P. T. Barnum or Madame Butterfly. You do not have to read many pages before you know all his prejudices and obsessions, his hopes and fears. He is full of fatherly advice, a strong supporter of the church, pats Shakespeare patronizingly on the back, records Omar tolerantly but regretfully and speaks kindly of the great writers of antiquity while deploring their morals.

His method is very simple. He takes for his subject some standard work like *Don Quixote* or *The Arabian Nights*, tells what it is about, advises you to read it, then trails off into a disquisition on men and things — a method typical of the professional book reviewer and plainly the outgrowth of those thirty years of oracling. At the very start he has a flash of inspiration, an idea of the kind that comes only once in a lifetime to great geniuses. It is, to review the Bible.

How does he develop this great idea? Not like a genius, for Fitch is no genius. He is rather of the school of Josiah Bartlett and S. Austin Allibone — one who can always be depended upon for the obvious. Fanciers of the obvious will find in Fitch an unfailing fund of delight. Does he trace the sources of the Bible in holy books of antiquity, sketch the influence of environment upon its doctrines, present the historical background, classify and analyze the content? Not he.

His scheme is far simpler, far less troublesome to evolve. He commends it highly and advises you to read it. Then, having said the last word on the subject, he turns resolutely to other matters.

The ground-plan of his essay may be stated thus:

1. The worthlessness of many modern books.
2. The value of culture.
3. Anecdote of a sea-captain.
4. Use of spare moments.
5. Reading habits of (a) the author, (b) Macaulay, (c) Longfellow, (d) Roosevelt.
6. Recommendation: Read the Bible.
7. *The Soul of the Bible*, a book published by the American Unitarian Association, commended for ready reference.
8. *Job* quoted.
9. Closing flourish, mentioning Ruskin, Defoe and De Quincey.

Thus the perfect method of Fitch.

In his realm he is a dictator more absolute than Kubla Khan. He is the original Mailed Fist of letters. Proofs mean nothing to him; like Gabriel Betteredge, he thanks God that he is constitutionally superior to reason. He puts down the opposition with a heavy hand. No quarter is asked or given, and the ringleaders are sent to the galleys without trial. Of the Baconian uprising he says: "Others spend much time on such nonsense as the Baconian theory. . . . As well ask one to believe that Herbert Spencer wrote *Pippa Passes* or *The Idyls of the King*." With him, whatever is, is not only best, it is exclusive. The idea that Garth did not write his own *Dispensary* he would regard as abhorrent to nature — a sort of literary vacuum. If Garth saw fit to publish the *Dispensary* over his own signature, that should settle the matter for all time, for Garth, having once figured in print, has be-

come an Authority, and an Authority is dearer to the heart of Fitch than his native strand, more sacred than the seven-pronged candlestick. Can you see him standing open-mouthed in the presence of the great modern literary sausage-makers? What a Boswell he would make to H. G. Wells!

But though we may smile at his faults and his foibles and his quaint way of revealing them, we must respect this man, smoking his pipe in his easy chair, letting the world go past, heeding not this nor that, standing for the right as he knows it and finding solace in intercourse with the gods. Thus considered, he is an heroic figure, and we must thank him for having taken us into his life. He is no clown, but a very average man of a very admirable mold, the sterling citizen, the pillar of society, to whom we may apply the lines of Starrett:

"You live across the way,
And up the road, and over in the lane.
You are my friends, my neighbors and myself;"

and his book is valuable because it is a sample of the mental content of his kind. It is pleasing, too, because it is a little book, printed on delightful yellow paper and embellished with plates laid in separately after the manner of old engravings, done as they do things in San Francisco. The pictures are a perpetual joy, and Messrs. Paul Elder and Company covered themselves with glory when they hit upon this most attractive format. I love to take up this little book for a quiet half-hour, to share its enthusiasms and renew my faith at its unfailing font, and I love to know that it is on my shelf where, like the mustard plasters, I can reach it quickly in case of emergency.

Mentioning emergency puts me in mind of another sort of folly with which I have never been able to sympathize — the folly that books take up too much room, and what is the use of owning them when you can't read them?

Books take up very little room. They admit readily of

being piled up on top of one another, or of the mantelpiece or in the corner, and among articles of their size none are quite so conveniently adapted to stacking underneath the table or behind the sofa. A book once carefully read becomes part of our mental furniture. We want to keep our grasp on its contents and we never quite abandon the idea of returning to it some day and repeating the delights of our first acquaintance. We cannot carry it all in our heads, but if the book is in the house we can tell just where to go for it. Even a well-told story is worth keeping on hand, for it is a source of possible *bon-mots* or learned allusions. I am sure Laurence Hutton would have agreed with this perfectly.

Laurence Hutton was one of the most delightful men I have ever met. I knew him intimately, though he could not say the same of me, for the legal maxim that there cannot be a husband without a wife does not apply to the authors to whom one becomes wedded. In no other way can a person make himself so completely known to another who is unknown to him. Hutton, though latterly he lived at Princeton, New Jersey, was the typical old-school New Yorker, even down to the moustache. He was the exact counterpart of an old uncle of mine and, were he living, I should expect to see him any sunny afternoon leaning on his cane on the sidewalk in front of the Hoffman House, did it still exist. True to type, he was delightfully lazy, sometimes too lazy to write his own books. He was a voracious collector. When he had exhausted the possibilities of books, autographs and playbills, when the wine of their delight had been drained to the dregs, to appease his hunger he turned to the collection of plaster and bronze casts of the features, hands, even feet, of noted persons. To the born collector nothing is impossible, and why he did not collect the actual *corpora* of his kings and heroes I cannot tell — I can only marvel at his moderation. He was the friend of all

the literary men of his time, inordinately fond of dining out (another type trait), and wise in the lore theatrical as only a New Yorker of his rank and station could possibly have been. Contact might be had with him in but one way, through the letter of introduction. Anyone who tried to reach him without this magic talisman would be set down as a crank or a designing person — unless it were a request for an autograph, and that, I am sure, would be complied with promptly and sympathetically.

Two very small volumes entitled *From the Books of Laurence Hutton* and *Other Times and Other Seasons* are full of delightful book-talk, embracing such vital subjects as book-plates, autographs, poetical inscriptions in books, dedications, and engraved portraits. The erudition displayed in these essays is positively appalling. How do you suppose he could tell, for instance, that Warton once wrote a sonnet on a blank leaf of a copy of Dugdale's *Monasticon*, or that a copy of *Prince Lucifer* which was presented to Lord Tennyson contained fourteen lines in the handwriting of Alfred Austin? Was anything hidden from this man? Did he maintain a vast classified card catalogue after the manner of Sherlock Holmes, or was it the ouija-board? We instantly reject the theory of finite knowledge by the same token that led Fitch to annihilate the Baconian theory, to-wit, that it doesn't seem at all likely.

Hutton's *Literary Landmarks* speak in every line of the man's deep-rooted devotion to great writers and their works. The *Landmarks* should be given a place of honor in every bookman's library. But Hutton's best book was one that he did not write at all, and it is called *Talks in a Library with Laurence Hutton*. A great popular demand having arisen for a volume of Huttonian book lore (discovered by Publisher Putnam, who had his ear to the ground), the author, being

full of years and wisdom and no longer afire with youth's enthusiasm for authorship, was persuaded to breathe to Miss Isabel Moore the secrets that the entire bookly world was agog to hear. From this arrangement resulted one of the most alluring books ever written t'other side Newton's *Amenities of Book Collecting*.

But I shall not spoil for anyone the delight of discovering that most bookly of bookly books. There is no joy comparable to that of looking into Chapman's *Homer* for the first time, but it is not a joy that can be felt at second-hand — each must experience it for himself. Every old book-lover is a new planet, but the trouble is that only a very few of them swim into the path of our telescopes so that we can discover them. Hutton has done this, so my advice to you is, be your own Balboa. This mixture of metaphors is a thing really outside my responsibility. It is due to my enthusiasm.

Someone mentioned Newton a while ago, and this brings up a subject that cannot be passed over. Newton is the literary Halley's comet of 1919, and he broke all traditions by becoming a best seller in a limited edition at a great many dollars per copy. He was most attractively gotten up in large paper with many illustrations; but the best feature about him was the manner in which he strung words end-to-end to make delightful reading — a feature much neglected by modern makers of books, literary or otherwise.

Newton tells it all frankly — what books he bought, what he paid for them, how he thrilled over them, how his wife, in some cases, failed to thrill. We have often wondered what Mrs. Newton thought of being dramatized in this fashion. Perhaps if she were to write a book we would get many important facts from a new angle.

These three are my particular bookly friends. With them my bookly faith stands or falls. It is true that others have

written books about books, but they have failed to strike the personal note. Their books are mere essays, but these men's books are the men themselves. The scholarly papers written by Mr. Lowell in the fastnesses of his library leave me unmoved. Stevenson was a master, but to my mind his essays were written in his mortal intervals — they are friendly, but there is nothing compelling about them. Brander Matthews' well-formed chapters are but eloquent addresses; his *Ballads of Books* is a fair anthology. But Hutton, Fitch, Newton — these are friends whom we may watch at their daily lives. They are self-revealers *par excellence*, and that, after all, is the lore that mankind is most eager to read, most quick to assimilate and most persistent to retain.

2

championed bold

Defied the best of panim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance
Milk

The true lovers knot had perhaps
its origin from nodus herculeus or
Hercules' knot, representing the
complication of Hermes' caduceus
in nod. Bro. V. E.

Outwitted

He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout
But Love and I had the wit to win
We drew a circle that took him in.

Edwin Markham

June 21,
1913.

For my unbeheldden friend,
Mr. Geo. S. Seymour.

FAVORITE AUTHORS

There are some authors that positively cannot be ignored. No really bookful library is complete, for instance, without its copy of the *Autobiography* of P. T. Barnum.

This soul-stirring book was the work of one who knew human nature to its uttermost reaches. The great wisdom of life is the knowledge of human nature. All know it to some extent; few as profoundly as Barnum did. The newsboy who sells you the daily paper for a coin once copper, now nickle and hereafter perhaps silver or gold, is a student of human nature—he knows just the right vocal inflection to arouse the desire to purchase. So the drug clerk knows just the right amount of studied indifference to arouse pleasurable anticipations of a nut sundae, spiced by just the right degree of uncertainty over the matter of getting it. This uncertainty itself is part of the lure of salesmanship, and were I awarding a prize, I would bestow it on the gentleman behind the watch-repair counter, who never seeks but is always sought after, never hurries, and never shackles himself by that old rule of trade that he who has been waiting the longest should be served first.

Now as compared even with such masters as the newsboy, the drug clerk and the watch-repair man, Barnum was a Buddha reigning in a solitary seventh heaven, and his business was the selling of romance to the hungry human soul. The instinct that inspires a boy to collect “treasures” persists, even though unrecognized, in the man. In my youth I preserved a small stone from the room in which Lord Darnley

murdered Rizzio, a beaded Indian slipper and the discarded skin of a snake's head from Ojo Caliente in Mexico. I had my coins and postage stamps and Indian arrowheads. We have all been through this period. On the way up from childhood we may have lost the more portable of these trinkets, but there remains the instinct to lay aside a printed sheet or picture or scrap of writing on the chance that it will be needed in our own or someone else's future scheme of things.

It was this universal dormant passion that Barnum released and brought to glorious fruition. He collected on a scale previously unheard-of; he collected with an enthusiasm that knew restrictions neither of time nor space; he collected with a catholicity of taste that appealed to every heart. The jungles of Africa yielded up to him their barbaric joys; the South Seas wrought for him their tropic charms; the frozen North gave him the rarest of its scanty wealth. The untamed races of man flocked to his standard and became his vassals; the animal kingdom knelt before its master. And having done all this, he opened the door of his mansion and invited the public to enter and walk in fairyland.

And what is the value of money compared with the service that Barnum rendered mankind? If he grew rich at this trade, our only regret should be that he did not grow richer. He did what we all wanted to do, and he did it for us. I will venture to say there is no man living who, if he had come across General Tom Thumb in convenient form for preservation, like an odd coin met with in circulation, would not have laid the General aside as a peculiar and valued possession to be exhibited to friends and perhaps presented to someone whose collection was complete except for just such a specimen. Surrounding circumstances prevented my collecting General Tom Thumb, but these obstacles were as nothing to Barnum, and he did the job for me. It was a very generous thing for him to do.

In the fullness of his years Barnum sat down and wrote the story of his life. I know he did not turn the writing of it over to a bright young newspaper man, after the modern fashion, nor did he even dictate it to a private secretary, for I have a page of the original manuscript written in his own scraggly characters. It is the story of a modern miracle-maker. Doing the impossible was a part of his daily round.

It starts off like a yarn by Mark Twain. Just an ordinary young man, growing up, going to work, journeying, looking for his place in life. Then suddenly he rubbed the lamp, and earth's treasure trove lay glistening at his feet. After that it reads like a yarn by Scheherezade.

Barnum's American Museum at Broadway and Ann Street rose and flourished and burned down longer ago than I can recollect, but the greatest of all circuses — first Barnum, then Barnum and Bailey, then Barnum, Bailey and Hutchinson — was the wonder of my young life. At the old Madison Square Garden — now itself almost a memory of the past — I trembled before the Wild Man of Borneo, fed peanuts to Jumbo and joined in the applause when the Master of the Show — himself a part of it — made entrance into his box and stood bowing and smiling before the multitude. One morning in the dining-room of the old Grand Union Hotel (another reminiscence), my aunt pointed out a stout man breakfasting alone at an adjoining table and said, "That's Barnum." I gazed, and remembered. . . .

So my present copy of Barnum's *Autobiography*, given me by Henry von Wackerbarth, is one of the treasures of my library.

As worthy to stand on the same shelf with this glorious book I place beside it another, closely related — two masterpieces of romance and imagination, even though they both are, or purport to be, narratives of fact. But what matters their truth so long as they hold us spellbound with their daring and

open to us worlds that we can inhabit only through them, vicariously? If they are true, I do not cherish it against them. If they are lies, they are blessed lies, and we are the better for them. Let someone some day write a book rehabilitating the lie and pointing out the incalculable benefit it has bestowed upon mankind.

The other of these books is the *Memoirs* of Robert Houdin. Now, Houdin was a professional conjurer and his life was one of daily intercourse with the gods. He could call spirits from the vasty deep and the arcana of all the ages were his own. Like his half-mythical predecessor, Cagliostro, he lived in England, Italy, Africa, the Near and Far East and the countries of Continental Europe, but principally in Paris, that incubator of magical genius, where every classical form of deception has had its origin. Houdin himself was the father of some of the present-day stage illusions — and he claimed the rest.

When one's constant occupation is the purveying of magic, how puny appear the affairs of men! When Houdin desired a rabbit he did not, as we less gifted mortals do, go to a rabbit dealer and bargain for one — he simply lifted one out of a tall silk hat. From the same source came his daily supply of colored paper shavings, his flags of all nations and his thin red silk handkerchiefs. When he wished to conquer a kingdom he did not fare forth with an army, as any stupid monarch might — he packed a few choice illusions into a portmanteau and issued a challenge to the chiefs of the rebellious nation to meet him in a contest of wits. Thus did he actually outdo the Algerian tribesmen and bring them to submission to France. Thus was proved once more the eternal ascendancy of illusion, and that man can be ruled if he can but be fooled.

The possession of a copy of Houdin's *Memoirs* was one of the bright spots of my magical period — the period when I

knew all the magicians of ancient and modern times with an intimacy approximating that of their valets or hairdressers, went to every magical exhibition that came to town and solved most of the illusions upon observation, and gathered every species of magical book or paper that I ever heard of — and the fairest of them all was the *Memoirs*. Then came a change of heart and I sold all my books, including this indispensable one.

A sold book that has really entered our lives is like the memory of people we have murdered; it refuses to leave us. The fact was that Houdin had become with me a Favorite Author, and though I did not know it when I traded him for a few coins, I could no more get rid of him than I could Grandfather Smallweed or Captain Cuttle. He had taken upon himself the proportions of an Institution; he was as vast as the Old Oaken Bucket, as all-prevalent as Santa Claus. What a success he would have been as prime minister! How ineffectual seemed the wiles of statesmen beside his discovery of the handkerchief of King Louis Philippe buried at the foot of the orange tree in the Tuilleries Garden, or the sublime assurance with which he pounded to pieces the rare old watch of a cardinal before his very eyes and restored it to him unharmed, suspended from the neck of a dove! Everyone has a private Hall of Fame, created sans the drawback of judges and committees, and here in mine was a vacant pedestal clamoring daily for restitution. I never ceased to hear the voice of my sold book crying to me across the void, so years later I bought another copy and thus restored the balance of nature.

To one who has never come under the spell of Robert Houdin, no description of his artistry is possible. We cannot create a poetic imagination in one who lacks it, nor can we supply a missing perception of beauty or color or form. It is a gift to be able to appreciate these things, and life is richer if

we can share it with the masters, whether of art, literature or magic. His power lay, not in the fact that he was the greatest magician that ever lived — for many, both before and since his day have held that distinction — but that he has proved it, with an overwhelming array of evidence, in his sublime book. Egotism, disgusting enough in the ordinary person, is perfectly fitting in one whose achievements justify it. In fact, modesty would be so false to Houdin's character that we should despise him had he tried to make his triumphs appear one shade less glorious than they actually were. Perhaps, examined with a magnifying glass, flaws may appear in the fabric — but who cares to discover them? It is the sort of picture that one must view from a few feet away in order to assemble the harmonies. It is no *Nude Descending a Staircase*, but a perfect, understandable whole.

It is true that Houdin's claims have been questioned. When I spoke a while back of princely prevaricators, it was not dear old Barnum whom I had in mind. Harry Houdini, néé Weiss, has written a book entitled, *The Unmasking of Robert Houdin*, in which he strives to discover the facts of the career of the man whose name he adopted — as if that were at all necessary! Houdini (still living) is known as the Handcuff King, and seems to have amassed a substantial fortune through the knack of wriggling out of impediments placed on his person. When he commenced his stage career he signalized his devotion to the great necromancer by assuming a professional name meaning "the little Houdin," on the theory that to be associated even by name to the man who discovered romance were honor enough for a mortal here below. But through much study and research, visits to living magicians and cogitations near the graves of those who have passed from the earthly stage, Houdini found out that his master had not only discovered romance, but had also written it. So he sat down

with a mind full of black thoughts to his self-appointed task of unmasking. You can see the awfulness of his wrath in the very name which he gave to his book.

If Houdini had confined himself to his title-task, his book would have had no claim to our consideration, for the truth or falsity of Robert Houdin's story is an issue as dead as last year's scandal. But in the telling, Houdini takes us with him to the shrines which he visited, and we stand beside him at the tombs of departed talent in respectful awe while the photographer records the solemn moment when Houdini lays a wreath on his hero's monument. It is all so solemn and delightful.

The funniest part of it is that Houdini takes his mission so seriously. It seems the most vital thing imaginable that page 144 of the *Memoirs* should be annotated to correct a false impression, or that a reminiscence of Philander Dootrix be invoked to confute a claim made by Houdin on page 288. One can fancy the chagrin of a reader who does not happen to have at hand a copy of the 1860 American edition of the *Memoirs*. Evidently the possibility of such a situation never occurred to the earnest unmasker.

Henry Ridgely Evans is another who has written most fascinatingly on magical topics. His book, *The Old and New Magic*, does not belong to the class of works wherein one learns the secret of the half-dollar suspended in air, or how to palm an egg or to produce a bowl of goldfish from beneath a silk handkerchief. He leaves all that to Professor Hoffman and instead discourses of the philosophy of magic and its place in human affairs — knowledge indispensable to every well-regulated person.

Mr. Evans' book was published in two editions by the Open Court Publishing Company (an oasis in a desert of Chinese and German philosophy). The second edition was so much

enlarged that it is virtually a new book. I have them both, but cannot lay my hands on them at present, which is the penalty one pays for too perfect a filing system. Never mind; I do not need the book to recall what to me is its brightest spot, an account of the life of Cagliostro.

Joseph Balsamo, who called himself Count Cagliostro, was a Sicilian adventurer who came to Paris in the period preceding the Revolution and captured that city by the boldness of his imagination and the splendor of his establishment. He claimed to have been the pupil of one Althotas, but in reality succeeded to a field recently vacated by an earlier magician, the Count of Saint Germain. He lived at a time when the mind of man was highly impressionable and in a world that was alert for any new sensation. Mesmer was his contemporary, and a host of other conjurers, whom he easily outshone, practiced their arts. He made converts among the noble and wealthy; Cardinal de Rohan became his follower and sought to learn from him the secret of turning lead into gold. He organized clubs of his own form of Masonry which he called Egyptian Rite, and traveled extensively on the Continent and in England, making converts wherever he went. His downfall came through the Cardinal whom he assisted in the well-known affair of the Diamond Necklace, and though he was acquitted by an anti-monarchical tribunal and enjoyed a triumphal progress through the streets of Paris preceded by a fantastic dwarf distributing medicines, he never really regained his lost prestige, and tradition says that he met his end in the dungeons of the Holy See.

Much has been written about this most romantic career, both as history and as fiction. Dumas has made him the hero of a whole series of novels styled *The Memoirs of a Physician*. Funck-Brentano, in *The Diamond Necklace* and *Cagliostro and Company*, has told the story with a wealth of historical

detail. There are plenty of other books — the collection of Cagliostroana is a specialty in itself, and I have, among others, a curious little contemporary life of him — but the most delightful part of Mr. Evans' essay is his account of all that is left of Cagliostro today, the wonderful old house of magic at Number One, rue Saint-Claude, with its majestic staircase once trodden by the glory of a kingdom, and its courtyard with its great gates transplanted from Marie Antoinette's prison, and its myriad secret inside furniture, such as sliding panels and communicating shafts, which every magician with serious aims in life finds necessary to the proper conduct of his affairs. I have thought that if I were transported to Paris with the privilege of seeing but one thing there, it would be this old house, provided I could reach it before the inevitable wrecker. Am I too late? Has the House of Cagliostro fallen before the Juggernaut car of Utility? Why is it that the romantic and the practical are ever at cross purposes, and dreams must always vanish? Why should not the outraged present rise in righteous wrath and demand its proper heritage in the past?

Paris the wonderful; the immortal innamorata of all who dream! While we are speaking of favorite authors, here is one whose name I do not know, who wrote for me the peerless book of Paris! In a corner of my library is a section devoted to this book, and here I can ever find inspiration for any venture into the realm of visions, even from the matter-of-fact histories of Guizot, Duruy and Henri Martin. I started this chapter by taking down Georges Cain's *Walks in Paris* and looking once more at the maps of the streets of the old city superimposed upon plates of the new. The sight of Marie Antoinette on her way to the guillotine never fails to thrill me, while Camille Desmoulins haranguing the multitude from his table-top in the Palais Royal moves me to desperate deeds.

I never cross the Pont Neuf with M. Hilaire Belloc but I see the two Knights Templar burning to death in Place Henri Quatre and feel a keen desire to join the mob which is hurrying to acclaim Julian the Apostate as Emperor of Rome. I know some day when in search of the residence of Marat (that elusive thing), I shall make the mistake of turning into the rue de la Harpe and suddenly remember with chagrin that it no longer exists. But I must have done, for I can feel your unspoken comment; that if you had wanted a geographic lecture you would have gone to hear Arthur Stanley Riggs. What you want from me is books and autographs.

Very well, then, here is a good one — a book so replete with the more important non-essential things of life that I feel justified in advising everyone to advertise for a copy at once. No use inquiring of your bookseller for, in common with most good books, it has been out of print for some time. It is *The Book of Witches*, by Oliver Madox Hueffer.

Somewhere in one of his delectable essays Hazlitt says that in his time there were in England forty thousand stout young country lads ready to fight to the death against popery, without knowing whether popery were a man or a horse. The same indecision comes over me when I contemplate the Madox Hueffers, Ford and Oliver, and after reading this book I must confess to being more in doubt than ever. For the author, Oliver, must have been born a witch or kin to a witch, otherwise 'twere impossible. Take, for instance, the chapter on *A Sabbath-General*. This is the work of one who knows whereof he writes. This is no mere book-learning, for no book was ever before written that dared to tell what this book tells.

He writes intimately of the home life of witches and thereby scores a gentle rebuke upon his fellow-craftsman Shakespeare. "More realistic, and thus all the more misleading, are the weird sisters in *Macbeth* * * * They give us, indeed, an ex-

cellent impressionist idea of the witch as she appeared in the public eye, some valuable recipes for potions, apt illustrations of divinatory methods and so forth, but no suggestion whatever of that quiet home life wherein the witch, like the British public, passed most of her existence." It is clear that this *Macbeth* legend is all too casual to have been of service to Oliver in compiling his great work, nor was Goethe much more enlightening. In fact, our author, from internal evidence alone, is able to point out inconsistencies in the character-drawing of the witches in *Faust* that completely establish his charge of lack of verisimilitude. None but an acknowledged authority would venture as far as that.

Unquestionably, this book will be the standard work on witches for years to come. There are chapters on *The Origins of the Witch*, *The Witch's Attributes*, *The Witch of Antiquity*, *Some Representative English Witches*, *The Witch in Fiction*, *Some Witches of Today*, to mention only a few. I do mention them because I am sensible of the lack of reliable information extant on these subjects, and would advertise to a wider public the fund of scholarship packed into these pages. The book should be specially valuable to poets, for here is the happening of things without adequate causes, the rushing to and fro of beings that mortal sense cannot detect, and in short, the whole gaily decked, gloriously illogical world of the unsubstantial that gives them such delight. None of your scientific pottering over proof here, for your author knows what he knows, and he will not be gainsaid.

The four chapters on persecutions of witches should make every right-minded person fume with rage. May not a man or a woman incant if he wishes without being boiled in oil for it? Have witches no rights that common people are bound to respect? What is the world coming to if an honest witch may not transform some ill-mannered infant into a harmless tabby

cat without having it talked about all over the village? Whose business is it if Satan does call of a Sunday afternoon? No wonder our ancestors sought homes on distant shores where they could be free to fascinate according to the dictates of their consciences.

But the most wonderful part of the whole book is the description of the flight of Mother Hackett across the Channel to attend the Sabbath-General on a lonely mountain peak in the Cevennes. This is so realistically done, from the opening storm in the dingle to the closing obscene rites in the presence of the Evil One, that we are alternately agog with excitement and a-shiver with fear. "*How did he ever find it out?*" is the question we cannot suppress. And to think that there are those, even now, who deny it all! "For so cunningly do these devilish hags, aided by their master's arts, conceal their exits and their entrances, their spells and incantations, that there be many ignorant men who, openly flouting Holy Writ, declare, even in these enlightened days, that there is no such thing as witchcraft or sorcery, and that they who seek out witches and slay them are no better than cruel murderers of poor helpless old women. Such are the craft and malice of Satan and the folly of mankind."

This chapter leaves the reader with the firm conviction that Satan alone of all living men is the one who possesses that personal, first-hand knowledge of the subject requisite to the authorship of such a book as this. Which brings me back to the question I raised a little while ago — who is Oliver Madox Hueffer?

And then from fifty famelen years
In quiet Illinois was sent
A word that still the Atlantic hears,
And Lincoln was the lord of his event.

— 'Abraham Lincoln'

John Dinsmore

For

The Bookfellows.

October, 1920.

AROUND MY STUDY

My study walls are decorated with mottoes, verses and bits of philosophy that I have scattered around with a view to making life nobler. These *jeux d'esprit* are all from my own pen, for, possessing the requisite afflatus, why should I draw my verbal decorations from treasuries of others? Indeed, my motto system, like the connecting boulevards that you see in city plans, extends even to the fly-leaves of books that have interested me, thus linking the books to the walls. Now that you are here, just step around and look at some of these gems.

Above the fireplace, fittingly, is this :

A corner in a library,
An old familiar chair,
A mind from griefs and worries free,
A book both good and rare —
Against my door may beat in vain
The world and all its schemes;
Then let who will be King of Spain
For I'll be Jack o' Dreams.

This little motto was first shown to Luther Brewer in Robinson's Chop House and he pronounced it good, so up it went. If he had frowned upon it, unquestionably it would have fallen into the discard, for Brewer is the printer of this book and never prints anything that is not of a high order of merit. A Boston firm has since asked and received permission to make use of it for advertising purposes.

Opposite this is one called *Inscription for the Mitre Tavern*.

I cannot hang it in the Mitre Tavern, so I hang it on my own wall.

'Twas here great Johnson used to come and sit,
While faithful Boswell plied his busy pen.
These rafters rang to Goldsmith's ready wit,
And Garrick spouted pieces now and then.

Take out that big first volume of the Life on the bottom shelf and you will find inscribed in the front of it:

You, Boswell, I admire greatly,
Keen analyst and judge of men,
With antique style and manner stately
Yet master of a dauntless pen.
You, Boswell, I admire greatly,
Who swam within great Johnson's ken
And drew his likeness accurately,
Not flippantly nor too sedately —
So we have come to know you lately
As master of a dauntless pen,
Keen analyst and judge of men.
You, Boswell, I admire greatly.

On the top shelf is a little book — they diminish in size from the bottom upward — a pocket atlas, specially bound in morocco, which has marked out on its maps the various journeys that I have taken in this country and Canada. Its first page says to me —

This little book records my journeyings,
And to my mind each well-marked record brings
The memory of a thousand pleasant things.

In the field of fiction there stand foremost in my mind books of the class that seize upon the imagination. Among these I count many of the works of Dickens, an author from whom no divergences of mood or clime can turn me. Numbered among them also are the books of Maurice Hewlett, some of the earlier writings of W. J. Locke, and two supreme romances by Jeffery Farnol. With these I have spent many charmed hours. The

first part of *The Broad Highway* is pure joy; as much cannot be said for the second part. But *Beltane the Smith* is wholly delightful and I have read it many times. This delight finds expression in a sonnet first published in *Estrays*, beginning

I met Sir Beltane in the cool greenwood

and having for its sestet

Framed in the golden panoply of youth,

Thine honor shineth than thy sword more bright,

More stout thy courage than thy coat of mail.

The archetype of chivalry, forsooth.

Methinks the world is better for this knight

Tho he but be a figure in a tale.

William De Morgan I have loved and lost, but his books are still with us. Whatever else is packed up, I want those always out and handy. Being such a partisan, I, of course, tried for De Morgan's autograph by the device of writing him a poem — and succeeded. He sent a splendid and characteristic "autograph on an island" which forms the frontispiece of my wife's book about him. The poem, "To William De Morgan," as originally written was eighteen lines long, but was later reduced to sonnet length in response to a standing rule requiring condensation. It starts off

O could I dip my pen in Charity

To write contentment on the Book of Years!

and goes on to speak of the worlds fashioned by the old-school romancers

Where humble virtue reigned; but long ago

The Secret with the Masters passed away

'Til thou, DE MORGAN, with thy magic pen

Taught joy and simple faith to live again.

This poem gave a certain Chicago literary editor, who I begin to suspect is not so unblest with humorous sensibilities as has been intimated, a chance to compare the writer with

one Elmer Chubb, LL.D., Ph.D., likening the expressions "humble virtue" and "simple faith" to the language of the highly moral but almost burlesquely bovine Chubb. In a two-column editorial in his weekly book section this writer developed the thesis that because I had confessed my appreciation of an author who scores his effect without resorting to the tiresome sex-appeal, a parallel might be drawn between my expressions and an utterance of the supposed Chubb in which he prays for the soul of Mary Garden the opera singer. Some day some future Morgan or Huntington may pay a fabulous price for a small volume bearing my book label, with this clipping inserted.

Whatever books we profess to admire, secret leanings must always be suspected towards the books we publish ourselves. Somewhere out front in my library stands *In Praise of Stevenson*, the poetic anthology compiled by Vincent Starrett and published in December, 1919, as volume one of THE BOOK-FELLOW SERIES. To celebrate this event I wrote a sonnet which was used in the circulars until it was supplanted by comments of pleased purchasers. So here is another bookly inscription:

TO VINCENT STARRETT

on the completion of his Stevenson Anthology.

You've done it, Starrett. Here, between these covers,
The world you've brought to honor R. L. S.
Who peopled it anew with wander-lovers
And buccaneers and comrades in distress.

His was the lure and lore of all the ages,
Across his stage Surprise and Wonder prance,
Adventure stalks triumphant through his pages,
Sly Mystery, and purple-clad Romance.

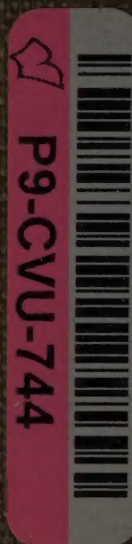
Here in this book are gathered for his glory
Old friends and new, in lyric tribute blent.
What temple bears a statelier clerestory?
What prince could have a nobler monument?

While songs are sung and loving hearts beat high,
The fame of him they praise shall never die.

This was the first anthology of poems about Stevenson ever to be published, and it not only made a name for Starrett but it quickened the interest of readers in everything associated with Stevenson. Curiously enough, and without any previous intent, it appeared at the same time with several other books about Stevenson. Under the impetus of this revival of interest, I wrote several sonnets and poems under the general caption, "Portraits from Stevenson," which are to have publication both in magazine and book form. In the unlikely event that the reader is so interested in this sequence that he will stop at nothing to get sight of it, he is invited to call upon the author and view it in manuscript. Unless he knows to what publications to go, to find it.

And lastly, speaking of inscriptions, as I believe we were doing, right opposite the door of my study, where it may be seen conveniently upon entering, emblazoned in letters of luminous lamp-black, is the last verse of the poem *Tailpiece*, which was adopted by a rising vote by the Council of Ancients the moment they heard of it, as the official motto of THE BOOK-FELLOWS. The sensitive nature of this poem requires that it always be printed in black-letter, and here it is:

For God ne knoweth greate nor small
But to ye Harte He lookes,
So hath He made us brothers alle
In felloeshippe of bookes.



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